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SUBJECT: BADR CORPS LEADER AL-AMIRI: DON'T CALL US A MILITIA

REF: BAGHDAD 397

Classified By: ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR MICHAEL J. ADLER, FOR REASONS
1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C/REL UK) Badr Organization General Secretary Hadi al-Amiri and Badr Organization Deputy Secretary for Protection Tahsin al-Azawi said in an April 24 meeting with DCG LTG Robert Fry, MG Rick Lynch, RDML Scott Van Buskirk and PolOffs that the Badr Organization should not be labeled a militia "because it disarmed" and became a political organization in 2003. In an apparent contradiction, he then protested that the USG should not refer "only" to the Badr Organization when it talks about militias. Al-Amiri also added that he rejected militia activity in the streets. The Badr Organization is proud to have fought against Saddam Hussein's regime, al-Amiri said, but after the fall of Saddam the members laid down their weapons. He further claimed that the Badr Organization does not commit acts of violence and Badr Organization members who insist on keeping their weapons must resign their membership.

¶2. (C/UK) Al-Amiri reiterated his desire to integrate 8,000 to 9,000 Badr Organization members into the ISF (reftel). He called on Fry to help speed the process. Al-Amiri argued that it is unfair to integrate soldiers from the former regime into the ISF and not include Shia militia members who fought against Saddam. Al-Amiri said that, if CF and GOI were serious about militia integration, the Badr Organization could do it quickly. He expressed his hope that all militias would cease to exist by the end of 2006.

¶3. (S/UK) When Fry showed al-Amiri evidence that Abd al-Allah Abd al-Lateifa of Diwaniyah, a self-professed Badr Organization member, was detained by MNF-I because he was caught with explosively formed projectiles (EFPs), al-Amiri repeated that the Badr Organization does not allow people to join unless they lay down their arms. He countered that although some CF soldiers have committed human rights violations in Iraq, Iraqis do not blame GEN Casey for their actions. Al-Amiri then said he would investigate Lateifa to determine if he was truly a Badr Organization member.

¶4. (C/UK) Comment: Hadi al-Amiri's comments reflect the standard SCIRI/Badr party line. What will matter in the end is the extent to which he and fellow SCIRI/Badr leaders are prepared to follow up with public statements and concrete actions that demonstrate acceptance that there is no place for extragovernmental armed groups in a democratic Iraq. End Comment.
SATTERFIELD